

**ESSENCE OF THE CONCEPT «RURAL TERRITORIES» IN THE CONTEXT
OF REALIZATION OF THE PUBLIC AGRARIAN POLICY OF RUSSIA**



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Abstract. Implementation of state programs is impossible without a clear understanding of the essence of the concept of «rural territory», which still remains without attention. Therefore, it is important not only to consolidate the concept in the Federal legislation, but also the list of criteria for classifying settlements into urban or rural. The article analyzes the definition of «rural territories» in the EU and Russia, as well as criteria for assigning the territory the status of rural areas. In addition, the main goals of sustainable development of rural areas in the Russian Federation, the achievement of which is possible due to the implementation of the proposed algorithm for the formation of target programs that take into account the individual characteristics of rural areas, in which activities are implemented. Priority directions of target programs of territories development are offered: organizational and legal; social and demographic; production and economic; infrastructural.

Keywords: rural areas, criteria of classification, governance, assessment algorithm development.

Introduction. With the adoption by the EU and Russian of a legislation, where one of the tasks of the state agrarian policy is the sustainable development of rural areas, increasing rural employment and their standard of living, and interest in the problems of rural areas at all levels becomes increased significantly (Gordeev, 2005).

Historically, agriculture in Russia plays a significant role in the development of agrarian regions and territories, as is still the main type of employment and source of income for rural residents. This fact puts the agricultural and agri-food sector at the heart of rural development based on the following principles (Van der Ploeg et al., 2000):

- Agricultural and agri-food sector is capable of generating processes of renewal of rural areas.
- Agriculture can compete with other sectors to attract resources, due to lower transaction costs and the costs of transformation (i.e., change).
- Paying attention to the flow of internal resources, the productive use of technology and the diversification of production towards new markets.

The special thing about the Russian rural areas is that they are the source of the food supplies and agricultural raw materials, natural resources. The huge raw materials potential is based on them: 8,9% of world farm field, 2,6% of grazing lands and 69% of forested area. These village areas are also a living place and recreative object for the health resumption and rest. At the same time in Russia and many countries of EC we can see a reduction of the rural settlements (tab.1).

Table 1. Population dynamics of rural territories in Russia

Number of rural settlements, by a year	Total	including the number of inhabitants				
		Without population	Less than 10 people	From 11 to 50 p	From 51 to 100 p.	More than 100 p.
in thous.						

2002	155,3	13,1	34,0	38,1	14,9	55,2
2010	153,1	19,4	36,2	32,8	13,8	50,9
In % to the total number						
2002	100,0	8,4	21,9	24,5	9,6	35,6
2010	100,0	12,7	23,6	21,4	9,0	33,3

Source: based on Rosstat, 2017.

Under current conditions the reducing the number of rural population along with an increase of unemployment leads to a weakening of the capacity of agriculture and increase food import dependency, which in turn creates an undeniable threat to the economic security of the country. At that the greatest impact on the socio-economic development of rural areas has the state of agriculture as the largest sectors of the economy.

These development trends of rural areas cause the increased differentiation of rural areas, which is observed in Russia from the 90s. The market rivalry mechanism divided all the territories depending on the degree of their adaptability to the market, the availability of resources, economic structure, the mentality of the population and the authorities. Earlier disparities in socio-economic development were smoothed by administrative methods. Since the beginning of reform in 90s directive planning transformed into the state regulation of the economy with the using of special-purpose programme.

Results and discussion. In the «Concept of Socio-Economic Development of the Russian Federation for the period until 2020» and «Concept of sustainable development in rural areas of the Russian Federation for the period until 2020» approved by the Government of the Russian Federation at the end of 2008 we can see that «sustainable development of rural areas, improving life of the rural population «referred to the main objectives of the agrarian policy.

However, the implementation of this program activities and territorial development management is impossible without a clear understanding about the subject-matter of the concept of «rural area», which goes under the radar. It should be emphasized that in the current federal legislation of Russian Federation this

term is not fixed, there is no clear quantitative distinction between urban and rural areas. In sociology and geography, word «rural» includes a habitable area outside the cities with all natural environment and resources, rural population and a variety of fruits of the previous work of people.

The definition of «rural areas», adopted by the OECD (1994) and the European Commission (1997) reads as follows: it is the countryside, covering people, territories and other resources, and social landscape of small settlements outside the immediate sphere of economic activity of big city centers.

In statistics of the European Union the following systematics is used – the single framework of regional statistics (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics – NUTS), which is regarded as accounting administrative units classified according to several levels of subordination. Rural areas in Europe account for about 86% of the territory and about 75% of the municipalities belonging to the category LAU2 (Local Administrative Units), forming the core element of the statistical nomenclature of territorial units of regions (Jonard et al., 2009). Table 2 shows the criteria used in different EU countries to assign the status of the territory of the countryside.

Table 2. The main criteria for attribution the territories to the rural areas in OECD

Criteria to be applied	Countries
Constantly building area with a concentration of population less than 1 thous. and a population density less than 400 people for 1 km ²	Canada
Areas with a low population density and scattered population	Finland
Areas with a population less than 2 thous. people	Greece
Areas related to agriculture with a low population and structure density	Italy
Places with a population less than 2.5 thous. people. or other areas which are not included to the number of urbanized one.	USA

Source: based on OECD, 1999.

Thus, the interpretation of the term in official documents is focused on population density and geo-statistical units, giving the rural areas an administrative

nature and ignoring the functional component, which reflects their socio-economic importance. Therefore, in this study it is suggested to use the approach offered Bernard Kaiser (1990), which describes a rural area as sum of the following elements:

1. The low density of population and development, causing the spread of «green landscape»;
2. Use of space primarily for agricultural purposes;
3. Lifestyle of population, reflecting the affiliation to small settlements and closeness to nature;
4. Formation of the mentality of the people under the influence of peasant background.

That is «rural area» means above all an area of human activity, and less the field of economic activity or administrative boundaries. In fact every part of Russian territory is divided by the boundaries of the Federation and further by the boundaries of municipalities which since 2006 are defined as rural and urban areas under the Federal law «On general principles of organization of local government in Russian Federation». On the basis of this law and the definitions we can give the following interpretation of the concept of «rural area» - a geographically defined area which geographically belongs to the countryside and appears as an unit of administrative division in the form of rural settlement and intra-settlement areas.

However, in order to improve the management efficiency of the territory in the Russian context it is appropriate to use different criteria from of typification giving extra «push» for the development of rural municipalities. In particular, it may be indicators of the three major economic systems in rural areas: production, infrastructure and tourism based on the number of residents. The whole criteria selected from each of the complex will make possible to take into account the specifics of a particular area and to distribute them by type of socio-economic development (Lewandowski et al., 1999).

For this reason it is important not only to consolidate the concept in federal law, but also make a list of criteria for classifying communities to the urban or rural. At the moment in Russia criteria which are similar to the OECD standards have not been established. Herewith, if we apply the OECD indicators to Russia, the vast number of administrative areas can be classified as rural.

Given the importance of the selected items, one can define the objectives of sustainable development of rural areas:

- diversification of agricultural production and multifunctionality of agriculture;
- raising the level of food security;
- increasing employment and rural incomes;
- the preservation of social and cultural traditions in rural areas.

Achieving these goals requires the implementation of effective mechanisms for economic and social development, taking into account the characteristics of individual rural areas and high indicators of differentiation even within the same region.

But in spite of numerous studies regarding to the territorial development planning, there is still no construction algorithm of dedicated programm's definition that take into account specific features of the countryside. In this regard among the features of the programs of agrarian and economic development can be identified:

- commitment to the final result;
- simultaneously consideration of programs as an instrument of agricultural and economic development and as an integrated subject to control the necessary financial, material, technical, labor and other resources;
- organization of management, monitoring and control of the implementation of programs based on integrated indicators inside of these territories.

From there the development of program measures should be based primarily on the characteristics of the territory defined by the results obtained by the procedure of resources. Figure 1 offers an aggregated algorithm for the assessment of rural areas development.

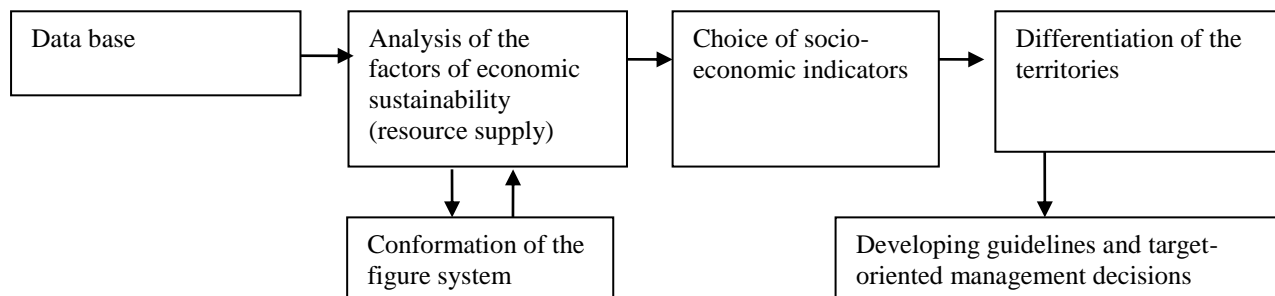


Figure 1 - Algorithm for the assessment of rural areas development

Summary. As follows from the analysis of the socio-economic situation of rural areas on the basis of the presented algorithm are the following promising directions for dedicated programs of territories development in the target:

- organizational and legal: the development of local government and its financial support, regulation of agrarian relations and forms of ownership, improving the legal framework and institutional structures;
- socio-demographic: providing rural employment, improving health care system and quality of life, the development of public utilities, roads and modern means of communication;
- diversification of production and economic structures: a machine-technological support for production, development of eco-efficient farming systems, the development of modern industrial infrastructure and agriculture;
- creation of the modern basis of information necessary to make grounded decision, for public awareness, reflection and control (monitoring) changes over the socio-economic situation in rural areas.

A contemporary view of sustainability from the perspective of economics, sociology and ecology, supplemented by the paradigm of multifunctionality of agricultural production is the important base for the development of targeted programs for the sustainable development of rural areas. Smoothing the sharp

differences and overcoming the crisis in the rural municipalities are not possible without state participation.

The need to support rural areas is defined by the fact that they do not only ensure food security of the country, but are a major source of manpower for cities, a repository of national traditions and customs.

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